

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is PREVENTABLE

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Don't Ask My Child to Fly

Bruce Ritchie 1997



Don't ask my child to fly,
for he has not wings.

Don't ask my child to see the glint on the eagle's beak,
for his vision has been diminished.

Don't ask my child to remain calm amid the din,
for her ability to screen out the noises has been taken
away.

Don't ask my child to be careful with "strangers",
for he is affectionate with everyone and prey for the
unscrupulous.

Don't ask my child to "settle down",
for the clock which works for you and I, does not exist
for her.

Don't ask my child to not play with the toys of others,
for he has no concept of property.

Don't ask my child to remember you tomorrow,
although you met today.

Don't ask my child to heal your wounds,
for her hands cannot hold a scalpel or sutures.

Don't ask my child to meet the challenges set by society,
for you have denied her the tools.

Don't ask my child to forgive you for standing idly by,
while he was being tortured in his mother's womb,

..... for he will, but He may not.

*"Utah State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution."
Practical solutions for a complex world*

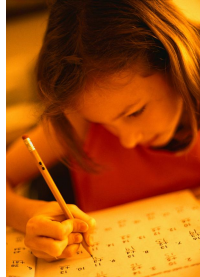


National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Helping children & families by fighting the leading known cause of mental retardation & birth defects

FASD: What School Systems Should Know About Affected Students

Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) have special learning needs and a wide range of behavioral challenges.



Educators can play a critical role in determining whether children with FASD reach their maximum potential.

Successful strategies for educating children with FASD include:

- ♦ Using concrete, hands-on learning methods
- ♦ Establishing structured routines
- ♦ Keeping instructions short and simple
- ♦ Providing consistent and specific directions
- ♦ Repeating tasks again and again
- ♦ Providing constant supervision

Recognizing FASD can be a challenging task.

Most students with FASD are unidentified or go misdiagnosed as most people with FASD do not have the characteristic features associated with fetal alcohol syndrome. The majority of students with FASD are not mentally retarded, and they can be articulate and skilled at performing specific tasks.

Students who exhibit behavior or learning problems may require psychoeducational testing to identify possible presence of central nervous system damage.

School Systems can prepare for students with FASD by:

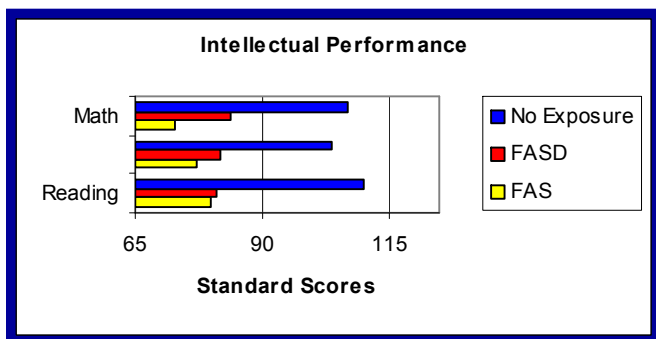
- ♦ Providing in-service training for teachers on recognizing the characteristics of FASD and strategies for educating affected children; and
- ♦ Providing access to special education in and out of school for those with learning disabilities that are associated with FASD.



How does FASD affect learning and behavior?

Students with FASD have problems receiving and processing information. They often cannot store what they learn or lack the mental capacity to use new information they have been given.

While students with FASD have IQ scores that range from 29 to 140, their overall level of adaptive functioning (i.e. ability to perform daily life skills) is often much lower than would be expected.



Common challenges for educators who teach students with FASD include:

- ♦ Hyperactivity, impulsivity, attention and memory deficits;
- ♦ Inability to complete tasks, disruptiveness;
- ♦ Poor social skills;
- ♦ Need for constant supervision; and
- ♦ Disregard for rules and authority.



National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Helping children & families by advocating for the prevention and intervention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, the leading known cause of mental retardation & birth defects in the United States.

FASD: What Young People Should Know



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is an

umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank

alcohol during pregnancy. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications.

FASD is 100% preventable if women abstain from drinking during pregnancy.

Young People and Drinking

Despite laws in every state that make it illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to purchase or possess alcohol, young people report that alcohol is easy to obtain.

- ♦ Alcohol is by far the most commonly abused substance by female adolescents with 36.5% of girls ages 12 to 17 reporting alcohol use.
- ♦ Underage binge drinking has become a social norm in the United States, with more than 7.1 million youth, ages 12 to 20, participating in this type of drinking pattern. Binge drinking was defined in this survey as five or more alcohol drinks in a row.
- ♦ Standard drink sizes are defined as 1.5 oz. of 80 proof liquor, 12 oz. of regular beer, or 5 oz. of table wine. Many cocktails may contain more than 1.5 oz. of liquor, combining several shots of liquor.



“Of all the substances of abuse (including cocaine, heroin and marijuana), alcohol produces by far the most serious neurobehavioral effects in the fetus.”

Institute of Medicine, 1996

Young People and Pregnancy

Unplanned pregnancy poses one of the greatest challenges to preventing FASD. Alcohol is a major factor in unprotected sex among youth, increasing their risk of unplanned pregnancies.

- ♦ The rates of teen pregnancy are noticeably high in the United States, estimated at one million per year, 85% of which are unplanned.
- ♦ Nearly one quarter of sexually active teens and young adults report having unprotected sex (using no form of contraception) because of alcohol or drug use.

Young women who are sexually active, not using contraception, and drinking alcohol are at risk for having a child with FASD.



Young people can help to prevent FASD by:

- ♦ Abstaining from alcohol use; abstaining from sexual intercourse;
- ♦ Volunteering with local FASD or substance abuse prevention coalitions;
- ♦ Organizing an FASD presentation for their school or other peer organization;
- ♦ Creating a peer education program to teach others about the consequences of drinking while pregnant;
- ♦ Writing letters to the editor or informational articles to their school newsletters or magazines that interest their age group;
- ♦ Select FASD as a topic for a school project;
- ♦ Encourage school/teachers to include FASD in their curriculum.